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Remembering Dr. "Jack" McTague, the man who'd been around the world twice

Ryn Williams
Layout Editor

Dr. John Joseph Jr. "Jack" McTague, 77, passed away peacefully at his home in Dade City, FL, on Friday, Feb. 11, 2022, after a courageous battle with cancer.

McTague, an Albany, NY, native, earned his Ph.D. from the University of Buffalo and spent much of his career at Saint Leo University before retiring from a full-time position to a part-time position in 2020. His impact spread far beyond the classroom.

A funeral Mass was held the morning of Wednesday, Feb. 23, at Saint Leo Abbey, with a reception following. Classes were cancelled as faculty paid their respects.

McTague was an active figure on campus who attended hundreds of events during his tenure at Saint Leo.

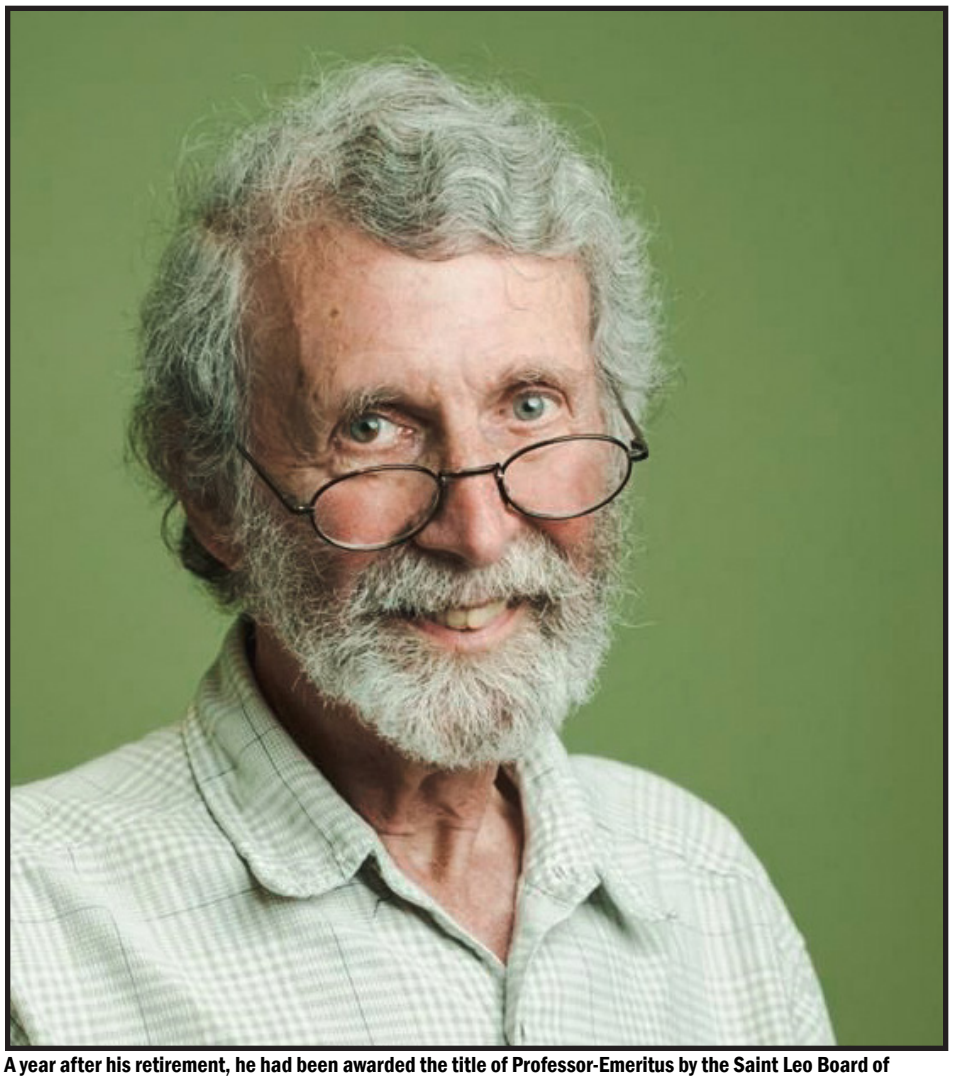
Professor Frank Orlando, an instructor of political science, has fond memories of McTague on campus. Their offices were on the same floor, and the two spoke frequently, usually about sports—specifically basketball.

"When there was an event, I often thought to myself, 'Well, should I go? Shouldn't I go? I'm busy, I'm tired,' but then I always thought, 'You know, I bet you Jack would be there.'" Orlando said. "And most of the time, he was, and it was great, because you'd have someone to talk with, to hang out with. He gave that example of, you know, 'Show up to things. Be at things. Support each other.'"

"He just led by example. He was an excellent example of what it means to be a Saint Leo employee," said Orlando. "I think, to the extent that I understand what it means to work here at Saint Leo, I learned that from Jack."

McTague's influence spread to his many students as well.

Burke Tomaselli, who now works at his local high school in Long



A year after his retirement, he had been awarded the title of Professor-Emeritus by the Saint Leo Board of Trustees at the end of April 2021. (Photo courtesy of Marco Rimanelli.)

Remembering Dr. "Jack" McTague continued

Island, NY, as he finishes his master's degree in teaching, graduated in 2016 with two B.A. degrees, one in political science and one in history, and a minor in honors.

"McTague's classes were always ones where I felt you'd leave every meeting with a new perspective or sense of understanding," said Tomaselli. "I hope everyone gets to experience having a professor with the passion and dedication he had."

Outside of the classroom, McTague was just as supportive.

"I remember seeing him at many events in the boardrooms on campus," said Tomaselli. "It was so obvious that he loved the environment of Saint Leo, whether that was seeing his students being active or being a part of the Saint Leo community however possible."

Tomaselli stated that he "absolutely" felt inspired by McTague regarding his current teaching career.

"Dr. McTague was your favorite professor's favorite professor. Brilliant professor, better man," said Tomaselli. "He is missed dearly."

Tomaselli is not the only student of McTague to pursue the education route.

Samantha Ralyea graduated in 2018 with a Bachelor of Arts in history. She is now a social studies teacher at Lennard High School, in Ruskin, FL. She had McTague "pretty much every semester" during her time as a student. Every class she shared with him was in the basement of the library.

"Dr. McTague was very knowledgeable in history," said Ralyea. "It was such a joy to be able to have that knowledge passed on to me."

Ralyea was a softball player and remembered McTague showing up to her games to watch her pitch.

"Dr. McTague, Dr. DuBois, Dr. Parker, and Dr. Astolfi pushed me always," said Ralyea. "I am where I am today because of all of them."

Kat Holzapfel was another student whom McTague impacted. She graduated in 2018 with a B.A. in history and a minor in sociology. She is currently located in Lakeland, FL.

"A lot of the time, I did whatever I could to make him laugh in class," said Holzapfel. "I was intensely paying attention to his lectures to find something that I could make a joke about to get him to laugh in class."

Holzapfel reminisced on McTague's teaching style. "It felt very much like stepping back in time. I always described as the man who'd been around the world twice. He was always like, 'Oh yeah, I've been there.' And then he would have photos and a good chunk of them would be in black and white."

Holzapfel remembered seeing him at all productions, music or theatre. She remarked that he knew "an outrageous amount of information."

"I'm not a woman of faith, but in my head, I feel like him and Doug are kind of hanging out together now again because I know that they were close," Holzapfel said. "Those two men truly got me through college. Jack and Doug were the two that made me love history, made me stay with the degree and everything like that."

Dr. Douglas "Doug" Astolfi, a professor of history at Saint Leo, passed away shortly after his retirement in 2018. The two professors were close friends.

Bella Bains, a graduate student at the University of Arizona, pursuing a dual degree in Middle Eastern/North African studies and public administration, graduated in 2016 with a B.A. of history minoring in English and honors.

"He was the first person I ever met at Leo. My mom and I were visiting, and we sat down with him," Bains said. "Looking back on it, I know that he was very kind. He took me seriously, which can be hard to deal with eighteen-year-olds."

"I had a number of classes with him, but most impactful was his Politics in the Middle East class," Bains said. "I'm a graduate student, and I rely on that background knowledge from that class… most of my knowledge came from him."

After graduating from Saint Leo, Bains spent two years volunteering with the Peace Corps in Morocco. She now works for the

Photo courtesy of Peter Marian

McTague founded Time Warp, a faculty, staff, alumni, and student band. He was the lead singer and bassist.

Center for Middle Eastern Studies at her campus.

Bains recalled an interaction between McTague and another student during class.

"One of the Saudi students said it was hard to read his cursive notes," said Bains. "[Dr. McTague] came back the next day and said, 'I can imagine it would have been very hard to read.' And he changed to print. I realized it was a big deal then… It's such a small thing, but I thought it was really cool of him, you know, to take into consideration those Saudi students and make adjustments on those habits."

Emily Mincey graduated from Saint Leo with a B.A. in history with a minor in world politics in 2016. She was also president of the history honors society. She now works in Washington DC as a senior events planner.

Throughout her four years at Saint Leo, she took every class McTague offered.

"Any class with him was sure to be great," said Mincey. "Dr. McTague was an amazing professor. He was someone who was truly built for this career."

"If I had to describe him, I would call him kind, beyond smart, unexpectedly funny, and wonderful," said Mincey. "I would tell people about seeing the Time Warp at Ralph's and the Rattlesnake Festival. I would tell people about the time he crashed his motorcycle the day before class, and he laughed it off, actively bleeding, and all the times I had deep belly laughs in talking with him."

Remembering Dr. "Jack" McTague continued

Time Warp—Saint Leo's faculty, staff, alumni, and student band—has been rocking and rolling since its conception in 1982. It has seen various members, but one constant has been McTague.

Peter Marian, an instructor of management, recalled meeting McTague for the first time at Ralph's—or San Ann Liquors—the local lounge where Time Warp performed. He asked McTague if Time Warp needed a guitarist, which was the beginning of a strong friendship between the two.

"The key to being in the band was dedication," said Marian. "I said, 'Jack, you know, I'm not a groupie... I'm more of a band aid.'"

Marian took over as an unofficial band manager and self-proclaimed "band-aid." For the years before Marian, most of Time Warp's gigs and rehearsals went unrecorded except on private devices. Marian uploaded Time Warp videos to YouTube, created a Facebook page, created flyers, and more.

"One of the last jam sessions we had with Jack was two weeks before he passed," Marian said. "His wife called me and said, 'Listen, Jack's going to come to practice today; please make sure you take some pictures.' I didn't think anything of it."

"We got together, and we practiced, for a little over an hour, and he went home," Marian continued. "So, for him, I think he wanted to jam with us one last time. One last jam. And it was nice; it was great that we did it."

"All of us asked him, 'Do you want Time Warp to continue?' And he said, 'Yeah, I think it would be great,'" Marian finished.

Janet Franks, a reference librarian at Daniel A. Cannon Memorial Library, met McTague in 2006 when Time Warp was looking for a new backup singer. She auditioned and got the role. She also said that there are plans in place to rename McTague's favorite classroom in the library basement, iTeach, after him.

Franks recalled a story of McTague in the cafeteria. She had just finished eating when McTague came and sat with them, and she had half of her sandwich left on her plate. He reached over her plate and ate her sandwich to make sure it wasn't wasted.

"For a long while afterward, I'd look around for him before I left any food on my plate," Franks said.

On Feb. 12, 2018, Time Warp performed at Selby Auditorium in Lewis Hall at "Time Warp does the '60s," hosted by the College of Arts and Sciences. Clothing and costumes inspired by the 1960s were "strongly encouraged."

"He was humble, very friendly," Franks said. "Was very knowledgeable about, you know, history and music."

Both Marian and Franks confirmed that McTague educated the audience on each artist before performing their songs. Marian referred to McTague as a "walking encyclopedia of knowledge."

Dr. Robert Cabot, professor of criminal justice at Saint Leo, was hired five years before McTague. He remembered him as a well-liked and brilliant professor who was "energetic" about teaching.

McTague's classes filled up quickly. It seemed like every student wanted to be in his classes.

"I never heard anyone say anything negative about him," said Cabot. "You'll hear kids talking… I'd advise students, and everyone seemed to like being with him."

Cabot remembered McTague being at men's basketball games more often than not. Close to his passing, the two attended a Saturday night game.

"Even a week, eight days before he passed, he was still doing as much stuff as he could," said Cabot. "He was committed to go out on his terms. I'm sure he had his own private moments of distress and worry, but he handled it better than I've seen a lot of other people. Better than I'm going to handle it when it comes around."

"He loved what he was doing," said Cabot. "and he liked the people he did it with."

Chuck Fisk, a retired Saint Leo faculty member, shared many years with McTague and Cabot. He was an associate professor of economics who retired after 41 years with Saint Leo and is also in the Saint Leo Athletic Hall of Fame for his work as Saint Leo's NCAA faculty rep.

He first met McTague when the latter was hired. They quickly became friends. Fisk remembered how McTague "lived" to play basketball, his favorite sport.

Fisk joined Time Warp in 1996 and stayed with the band for 15 years.

Photo courtesy of Peter Marian

Time Warp does the '60s! According to Peter Marian, everyone except Dr. McTague (fourth from left) had to purchase a costume to fit the theme.

Photo courtesy of Peter Marian

Remembering Dr. "Jack" McTague continued

"Days before he died, I thanked him for providing one of the best experiences of my life—playing in a rock band," said Fisk.

Fisk commented on how McTague "always stayed current" in his field, publishing many articles throughout his tenure.

According to Dr. Marco Rimanelli, professor of politics, international security, and diplomacy at Saint Leo, McTague was an active member of the Florida Conference of Historians. McTague was also a member of the editors' board of the Florida Political Chronicle, a scholarly journal in which Rimanelli is the editor.

"He remained to the bitter end as an active member," Rimanelli wrote in the Editor's Postscript titled "Celebrating Emeritus-Professor Jack McTague (1944-2022)."

Professor Beverly Ledbetter, an adjunct professor in the College of Education, met McTague years ago while teaching history at Pasco High School in Dade City, FL. The two served as judges for the Pasco County History Fair.

"It is a national program in which students receive a theme and do research on that theme," said Ledbetter. "It is a big program in our Pasco middle schools."

Entries for the History Fair could be exhibits, websites, documentaries, performances, or papers. The two judged the paper category together. Ledbetter said that he sponsored an award for students of the fair.

She described him as "well respected" by her student teachers, and that he was a "thoughtful, passionate man who believed the truth in history."

Dr. Elisabeth Aiken, an associate professor of English and associate chair of the interdisciplinary studies department, remembered McTague. Aiken was the first employee hired at Saint Leo for the "instructor" position. McTague sought out her experience when the University was seeking to hire an instructor for the history department.

"He came to talk to me about what my position looked like, what the requirements were, was I satisfied with it," Aiken said. She took maternity leave during McTague's search. "When I came back, I went to find Jack right away. He told me that they had actually hired an assistant professor, but he was very happy with it. He was really interested in my experience at Saint Leo, how I got to know the university. He reached out as a friend."

Aiken said that she felt inspired by how McTague found fulfillment in teaching and that he was "foundational" for so many faculty.

"He'll be missed. Having been at Saint Leo for 16 going on 17 years, I think I took it for granted that almost every time I walked in or out of St. Ed's, I would see Jack somewhere, walking to or from class with his coffee mug, ready to greet and ask how classes were going, seeing him on various committees and whatnot," said Aiken. "I do miss seeing him."

The assistant professor McTague hired went on to become the dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, Dr. Heather Parker.

The first time Parker met McTague was during her phone interview for the previously stated position. She described him as "very warm" during her first impression.

"Anyone in Saint Edward Hall could hear his signature laugh throughout the day," said Parker. "He truly loved being at Saint Leo."

"He was a world traveler," said Parker. "We always knew that as soon as the semester was over, he would be headed to a different place in the world."

McTague visited over 40 countries during his life. He had a house in Albany, NY, where he would stay for a few weeks before heading off to a different part of the world.

McTague always stayed updated on politics and sports, reading the newspaper every day. Parker remembered him reading the newspaper in his office in St. Edward's Hall, while Cabot remembered him reading the newspaper while getting breakfast at the cafeteria before his classes.

Dr. Daniel DuBois, an associate professor of history, also met McTague during the hiring process at Saint Leo.

"I could immediately tell how devoted he was to the school and to the students. And I came from a small liberal arts university, and professors like Jack had made a huge impact on my life," DuBois said. "So to see that that was the program I was coming into, was the reason why I chose to come to Saint Leo."

"He and Heather and Doug, before Doug passed, took an incredible role mentoring me, teaching me what it's like to be a college professor and what Saint Leo is about," said DuBois.

At the funeral for McTague, DuBois recalled a woman he had never met sobbing. When they spoke, he found out that she was not one of McTague's students and had never gone to Saint Leo, but instead knew him through community theatre.

"She came, just heartbroken because that is the impression that he had made on her," DuBois said. "I think that was a great testament to what he was like as a person."

"He was as well-traveled as anybody you would ever meet," DuBois concluded. "As open-minded as anybody you could hope to meet. A dedicated teacher to the end."

Time Warp is planning on playing again in the first week of May at Ralph's. The date is to be decided, though Marian stressed that all previous Time Warpers should show up with their own instruments. More information will be announced on Time Warp's Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/bandwarp.

Contributions for the "Jack McTague Scholarship Award" can be made to the Heritage Arts Association, P.O. Box 1131, Dade City, Florida, 33526.

Preparing for Easter: Saint Leo University's Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) Program

Alora Peters
Editor-in-Chief

Easter Sunday, falling this year on April 17, is fast approaching, which means that Saint Leo University's RCIA group is hard at work.

For those unfamiliar with the acronym, RCIA stands for the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults, the name of the process by which an adult prepares to become Catholic.

A person becomes Catholic through the sacrament of Baptism, which typically takes place shortly after birth. Other initiatory sacraments—such as First Holy Communion and Confirmation—will follow later, taking place as the baptized infant becomes older and grows into young adulthood.

However, when an adult wishes to enter the Church and be baptized, the process looks a little different.

RCIA takes the introductory faith formation and education process—which ordinarily occurs throughout the childhood of a Catholic who was baptized as a baby—and condenses it into a shorter, oftentimes more intense course that will run for about a year prior to Baptism.

"It is a very diverse journey of faith for those who have never heard the name of Jesus or who have never had the opportunity to dive more deeply," said Lucas Nocera, who is the coordinator of the RCIA program at Saint Leo. "We cover the entirety of the Catholic Creed and salvation history, the sacraments, morality, and the need of both Scripture and Tradition."

RCIA is generally conducted through a parish church; however, when students began to show interest in joining Catholic Church, Saint Leo's University Ministry saw an opportunity to step in.

"The RCIA program was established in Fall 2020, when a few students came to University Ministry asking to become Catholic," said Nocera. "In 2021, two people came into the Church."

Since the program began on campus, more students have shown interest and began the process. This year, with six students in RCIA, Saint Leo has the largest group yet.

"Most catechumens—people who are preparing to be baptized—come into the program through word of mouth and recommendation from friends," said Nocera. "We have four catechumens who will be receiving all three sacraments of initiation, one student who will receive the Eucharist and Confirmation, and one who will be receiving Confirmation."

Photo by Alora Peters

Lucas Nocera (center) pictured with two of his students, Kyle Desmond (left) and Max Mischenko (right). The RCIA group recently traveled to St. Jude's Cathedral in St. Petersburg, where the catechumens were formally presented to the bishop in preparation for their upcoming baptisms.

Kyle Desmond, a sophomore majoring in criminal justice, is one of the students preparing for initiation into the Church this Easter.

"I always wanted to become one with God and one with the Church," Desmond said on his decision to become Catholic.

Desmond says that he found out about Saint Leo's RCIA program through Dr. Thomas Humphries, an associate professor of religion, theology, and philosophy at Saint Leo.

Humphries introduced Desmond to Nocera and will be serving as Desmond's baptismal sponsor—a role similar to that of a child's godparents, in which the sponsor serves as a spiritual parent or mentor that encourages the catechumen to remain faithful to the Church.

Nocera meets with the group once a week for formation and discussion. The preparatory RCIA classes have provided an excellent opportunity for Desmond and other students to learn more about the traditions of the Catholic Church.

"It's preparing me to become baptized," said Desmond. "Fr. Randall and Lucas are the most inspiring apostles and teachers."

Desmond and three other catechumens from Saint Leo—Manny Sado, Max Mischenko, and Darrell Passigue—will be receiving the sacrament of Baptism during the Easter Vigil Mass on April 16, the night before Easter Sunday.

The other two students, Jason Kaczynski and Veronica Vasquez, who have already been baptized, will be welcomed into full communion with the Church slightly earlier and will be receiving the sacrament of Confirmation on April 3.

Both celebrations will be taking place at St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, a local parish near University Campus. Additionally, Fr. Randall Meissen, Saint Leo's University Chaplain, will be celebrating Mass on both occasions and will be administering all of the sacraments to the RCIA students.

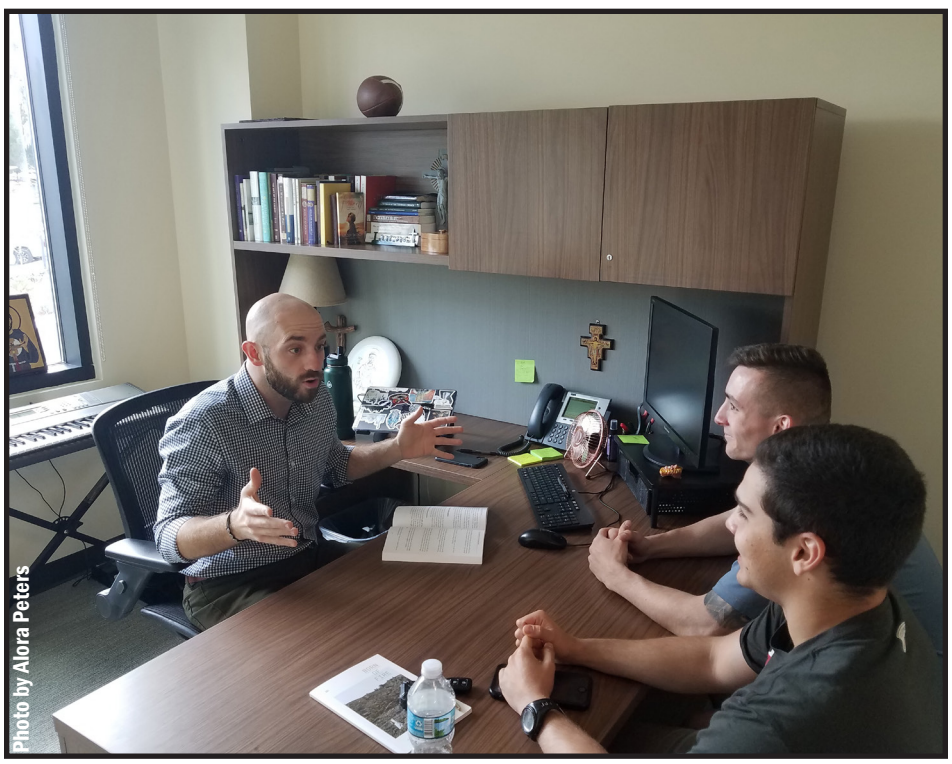


Photo by Alora Peters

Lucas Nocera's RCIA classes have followed the structure and format of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, in which students study the Trinity, salvation history, the sacraments, morality, prayer, and scripture.

Students who are interested in becoming Catholic or learning more about Saint Leo's RCIA program should contact Nocera through email at lucas.nocera@saintleo.edu or stop by University Ministry's new offices on the second floor of the Wellness Center for more information.

Changes to Saint Leo University's Honors Program: Preserving old strengths and developing new ones

Tayhana Taylor
Campus News Editor
World News Editor

The HON 151: Faith and Politics 1st-year seminar is one of the new courses in the program. The class focuses on the ideas and perspectives on how faith and politics are connected. It is taught by three professors, Professor Frank Orlando (left), Dr. Stephen Okey (middle), and Dr. Timothy Jussaume (right).

The University's Honors program is one of the many programs that fosters unique learning experiences for students.

In 2020, the new director of the program and associate professor of philosophy, Dr. Timothy Jussaume, started adjusting the program to improve honors students' experiences inside and outside the classroom.

"Since I took over as the director of the program, we have made tremendous changes, like launching a new honors curriculum," said Jussaume. "The new program officially started in Fall 2021, and the new curriculum focuses on global citizenship."

As a way of incorporating the theme of global citizenship, there have been new classes introduced to the students in the program.

"I have always loved being in the honors program," said senior Victoria Budnar-Chapman, a senior honors student who is double majoring in economics and accounting, "The recent changes that Dr. Jussaume has made have only enhanced the program and made it more friendly for the students at Saint Leo University."

The program's new theme has enabled honors students to think broader with an international perspective. This allows students to engage in discussion related to new cultures, perspectives, philosophies, and so on.

"My biggest takeaway from being in this new program is that it prepares us students for the real world by discussing current issues and topics," said Budnar-Chapman. "The theme of global citizenship allows people to think outside of themselves, which will contribute to a more accepting and unified world."

Ashley Tucker, a junior honors student majoring in criminal justice. expresses that expresses that she has enjoyed the changes made to the program.

"When I first started the program, the courses were heavy and lacked peer interaction, but with the new changes, I have seen more flexibility, peer interaction, and fun," said Tucker. "I have gotten to experience phenomenal classes like the HON 360 course: Hip Hop and Social Justice taught by Dr. Ebony Perez, department chair of undergraduate social work."

Over the past two years, the program has become more student-friendly and flexible.

"We are really emphasizing how flexible the program is for our honors students because students can take the honors courses that suit them best," said Jussaume. "Aside from making changes to the classes, we have been building a community within the honors program that fosters inclusion and builds leadership skills."

The new honors program gives students opportunities to become leaders and enhance their interpersonal skills through the new student-led activities within the program. One example is allowing students to be a part of the student honors council and become mentors in the new mentorship program.

"We now have a student honors council, and we also have honors events where students can interact outside of the class," said Jussaume. "It is still a work in progress, but we have grown a lot, we now have 100 students, and when the program just started, we had 70 students."

Although the program has a new direction, many of the adjustments have molded the strengths of the old honors program.

"The current program depicts some of the strengths of the old honors program, in terms of understanding the history of ideas, helping students become more articulate, build their public speaking and communication skills," said Jussaume.

The honors program now has a diverse group of faculty members from various departments teaching classes, and the structure has also been altered.

"In the old program, the classes followed a specific sequence, but this current program allows students to choose the honors courses that work best with their schedules," said Jussaume. "There are more options for honors courses, and we have done this by increasing the number of faculty teaching in the program."

One of the main changes to keep the new program interesting is the introduction of new classes each semester.

"We are always working towards creating new and better classes that keep students engaged," said Jussaume. "I am always excited about revealing the new courses to our students."

Intending to enroll at least 10 percent of the University's student population throughout the year, the honors program accepts students who meet the criteria. The academic requirement to be accepted in the program is a 3.5 unweighted GPA and the completion of a supplementary essay.

"We are always looking for students who are willing to experience a different classroom experience and ready to challenge themselves positively," said Jussaume. "Going forward, the aim is to ensure that each honors class has interactions outside the classroom that connects with lessons being taught inside the classroom."

Students who are interested in being a part of the differential learning experience the honors program provides can visit the honors program website at https://www.saintleo.edu/honors-program, or email the program director at timothy.jussaume@saintleo.edu.

On the Docket

Supreme Court cases, October 2021-22 term

Article by Khamille Labbé, Editorials Editor & Graphics by Reese Bradley, Lead Graphic Designer

Earlier this year, the U.S. Supreme Court decided on President Joe Biden's vaccine mandate. In Biden v. Missouri, the Court reviewed if the Health and Human Services (HHS) could force health workers at facilities with both healthcare programs, Medicare, and Medicaid, to be COVID-19 vaccinated, along with a broader vaccine-or-mask mandate for employers with at least 100 employees. On Jan. 13, 2022, the Court concluded that the HHS has the authority to enforce vaccination – except for medical and religious reasons – through a per curiam decision (a decision made collectively by the Court).

Biden v. Missouri is just one of the cases the Court has had to rule on, but the nation's highest Court has a full docket with important issues this term. Justices will rule on matters including abortion, possession of firearms outside the house, religious expression, and varying other topics.

Cases with Pending Results

1. Carson v. Makin

The Carson and Nelson families are opposing Pender Makin, Commissioner of Maine's Department of Education, as Maine is prohibiting them from receiving state funding from the state's tuition assistance program because they want to use the funding for a religious school. Petitioners argue that Maine is preventing their children from getting the best education and is violating their constitutional rights.

In 2020, the Court ruled that states do not have to provide public funding for private schools. However, if they did, states could not discriminate based on the institution's religious status, as they explained in a similar case, Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue. The case ruled that states could not discriminate based on the institution's religious status.

Nevertheless, present lower courts have found that the ruling did not address how the funds would be used, so Carson is taking the issue up to the Supreme Court.

Questions being considered:
Can public funds be withheld from schools that offer religious instruction?
If funds are withheld, is that a violation of the 1st or 14th Amendment?

2. Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization

Thomas E. Dobbs, State Health Officer of the Mississippi Department of Health, aims to create a law in Mississippi that will ban most abortions after 15 weeks, moving it up from the previous ban of 23 weeks. Jackson Women's Health Organization petitions that Dobbs' move to ban abortions at any level is unconstitutional.

This is the most significant abortion case in the previous three decades, as the Supreme Court will essentially be able to reexamine – and perhaps overturn – its rulings in Roe v. Wade and Planned Parenthood v. Casey. The argument was first presented on Dec. 1 and will be voted on later this year.

Texas' abortion law, which prohibits abortion after the first six weeks of pregnancy, was already approved.

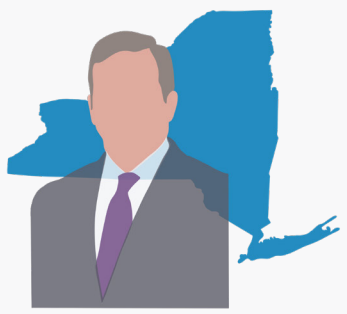
Questions being considered:
Is Mississippi's law banning nearly all abortions after 15 weeks' unconstitutional?
What will happen if Roe v. Wade is overturned in every state?

3. New York State Rifle and Pistol Association v. Bruen

Robert Nash and Brendan Koch filed suit, arguing that their Second Amendment rights had been violated after being denied a license to carry a gun in public due to lack of proper cause.

The case deals with a New York law that limits someone's ability to carry a concealed weapon without "proper cause." The state defines "proper cause" as "a special need for self-protection distinguishable from that of the general community or of persons engaged in the same profession."

Respondents Richard McNally—who denied Nash's and Koch's request–and Kevin Bruen–the superintendent of the New York State Police–counter that the law is a valid exercise of New York's regulatory power. This case will mark the most significant trial of the Second Amendment for the first time in 11 years.



Questions being considered:
Is New York violating petitioners' Second Amendment rights?
Is the 'proper cause' law violating the constitution?

4. West Virginia v. Environmental Protection Agency

This case concerns whether the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has the authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions under the U.S. Constitution. West Virginia aims to uphold the Affordable Clean Energy rule, which removed the guidelines the Court previously approved of in 2015 Clean Power Plan, which were later repealed by the Trump administration.

Questions being considered: Does the EPA have the authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions? If so, is there a limit to the industries they can regulate?

Upcoming Oral Arguments

1. Berger v. North Carolina State Conference of the NAACP

The NAACP branch of North Carolina has filed a lawsuit against a voter-ID bill in the state, claiming that it violates the Constitution and the federal Voting Rights Act. Philip E. Berger, member of the North Carolina State Senate, is defending the constitutionality of the voter-ID bill in both federal and state court. The bill in question, North Carolina Senate Bill 824, requires all citizens to present a photo ID to vote. The Court will be reviewing if Berger, as a state legislator, has the right to intervene in the case to defend a state voter–ID law.

Date of Argument: Mar. 21

2. Morgan v. Sundance, Inc.

In Sept. 2018, Robyn Morgan sued Sundance, Inc. for violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act, claiming that the company failed to pay her for overtime work. The district court denied Sundance's motion to dismiss. The company provided an answer to Morgan's complaint, but did not assert its right to arbitrate her claims. Sundance tried to compel arbitration nearly eight months after Morgan's case was filed, but the district court argued that Sundance had lost its right to arbitration.

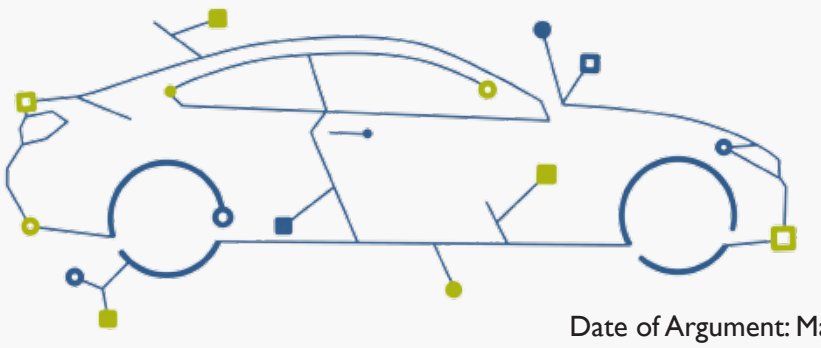
However, the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit overturned the district court decision. Now, the case concerns a circuit split (which occurs when two or more circuits in the U.S. court of appeals interpret federal laws differently) regarding arbitration clauses of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.

Date of Argument: Mar. 21

3. ZF Automotive US, Inc. v. Luxshare, Ltd.

In Aug. 2017, Luxshare entered a large-scale business deal with ZF Automotive US, and the deal closed about a year later. Then, Luxshare allegedly discovered that ZF fraudulently concealed certain material facts, inflating the purchase price. The parties' purchase agreement demanded that all disputes be resolved by three German arbitrators, and Luxshare intended to file claims for losses incurred because of ZF's alleged wrongdoing.

However, they sought to obtain discovery from ZF and its senior officers first, and asked a federal district court to compel discovery under 28 U.S.C. 1782(a). The law authorizes federal district courts to compel litigants subject to their jurisdiction to testify or provide documents "for use in a foreign or international tribunal."



Date of Argument: Mar. 23

4. Torres v. Texas Department of Public Safety

The petitioner, Le Roy Torres, served in the U.S. Army and is a former state trooper from Texas. While deployed in Iraq, he was honorably discharged after sustaining lung damage. Torres later sought reemployment with the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS). He was hired as a state trooper, despite requesting for a different position. DPS had declined Torres' request and placed him as a state trooper temporarily, stating that if he declined the position, his employment would be terminated. Torres resigned.

He later sued DPS in state court for violating the Uniformed Service Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994. DPS moved to dismiss the case and the trial court denied the motion, but the Texas Thirteenth District Court of Appeals overturned the decision and granted DPS' motion.

Now Torres is trying to appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court.

Date of Argument: Mar. 29

The Lions' Pride Media Group wants to hear from YOU!

What do you think are the most pressing issues that the Saint Leo University administration needs to hear about and address? Let us know by scanning the QR code to the right and taking our survey.

Survey is open to current undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff, and recent alumni.

Dade City's hidden gem: Solutions Thrift Store

Satyne Doner
Contributing Writer

Less than 5 minutes away from Saint Leo University's main campus is a thrifting haven: Solutions Thrift Store. Located at 35535 State Rd 52, this quaint store is home to a vast array of second-hand clothing, housewares, furniture, knick-knacks, and books.

At Solutions, patrons can shop sustainably and contribute to the Pasco County community because 100 percent of sales support victims of domestic and sexual violence.

Solutions Thrift Store is a part of Sunrise of Pasco County, an agency dedicated to uplifting, educating, and empowering victims of domestic abuse. The agency was founded in 1982 by survivors and has supported thousands of local families since then.

In addition to being a treasure trove of gently used clothing and collectibles at fair prices, Solutions offers weekly deals, too. For example, on March 1, their sale was half-off all housewares; on March 3, they had half-off all boutique clothing.

At Solutions Thrift Store, guarantees patrons secure a "Thrift Store Score," or bargain!

Saint Leo students are welcome to shop, donate, and volunteer. Solutions has many ways to get involved, from sorting racks to tagging items. The donation process is quick and easy; donors can simply drop off items at their back door.

Both donations and purchases support families who have been affected by domestic violence. Families are given priority to donations and are free to take anything necessary to start a new life away from abuse, whether clothing, furniture, or linens. All proceeds from Solutions Thrift Store go towards these families, including those not involved with Sunrise of Pasco County's agency.

Shopping with a purpose has never felt so good. At Solutions Thrift Store, patrons do more than making a purchase–they help uplift the community. Whether it's thrifting, volunteering, or donating, every little bit counts and is appreciated. Next time you're in the mood for a bargain, head to Solutions. It's only 5 minutes away!

For those interested in finding out more about Solutions Thrift Store, call them at (352)-521-3000. They are open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Their website is sunrisepasco.org/thrift-store.

If you or someone you know has been a victim of domestic or sexual violence, please call their 24-hour hotline at (352)-521-3120.

Photo by Satyne Doner
You can even find Saint Leo University collectibles at Solutions Thrift Store!

Photo by Satyne Doner
The team at Solutions Thrift Store work hard to color-code all clothing, which makes shopping a breeze.

Photo by Satyne Doner
The best wall in the entire store- their expansive collection of books, DVDs, and records.

St. Olga of Kyiv: A story of conversion, vengeance, and forgiveness

Ryn Williams
Layout Editor

Relations between Russia and Ukraine are as tumultuous as ever, and the threat of war hangs in the air as many sovereign countries sanction Russia for the invasion of Ukraine.

St. Olga of Kyiv–or Kiev–is, for many, a symbol of widowhood, of a strong female leader, and of vengeance. But, for some, she is a symbol of a brutal warlord who found forgiveness in the teachings of Christ. For both Russians and Ukrainians, she is a founding figure.

Dr. Thomas Humphries, an associate professor of philosophy, theology, and religion, shared some knowledge about St. Olga, a figure who has been brought up recently amid the current invasion from Russia into Ukraine.

The story of St. Olga is a complicated one. While there is not much on her life before her marriage to Prince Igor I of Kyiv, she is an immigrant with pagan Viking roots.

"Whether she's Saint Olga of Kiev, K-I-E-V, or whether she's Saint Olga of Kyiv, K-Y-I-V, and the difference here is significant… how you transliterate those characters and how you pronounce them," said Humphries, "makes a different. Kiev (key-ev) is the more Russian pronunciation, and Kyiv (ka-ev) is the more Ukrainian pronunciation."

"How do you pronounce the name of the city?" asked Humphries. "Is St. Olga a Ukrainian? Does she belong in Kyiv, or is she a Russian saint? Was she in Kiev?"

The history of Kyiv-Kiev is a complicated one tracing back hundreds of years. Modern day Belarus, Russia, and parts of Czechoslovakia and Poland became home to the Rus' people, a clan that effectively came to occupy the territory in the first millennium. The center of that group was in what is now Ukraine, and St. Olga is central to the development of this mixed culture.

"They're pagan, and they're brutally pagan," said Humphries. "This is a brutal time."

St. Olga and Prince Igor I were attempting to consolidate power. They would also protect certain groups if enough money was handed over to them in a system that lies somewhere between taxes and bribes.

"Olga is a fierce warrior, and she's also, by most accounts, beautiful. So you have this beautiful and powerful woman who also turns out to be brutal as a tactician in war. Her husband is killed while trying to extract more money from one of those city-state-clan-tribe-groups. Turns out, their army was more powerful; Igor didn't bring enough soldiers with him, so they kill him pretty brutally."

In the most popular version of the story, the enemy group dismembered Prince Igor I by tying each of his limbs to a different tree and then allowing them to rip him apart. There is a dispute about how St. Olga enacted her vengeance on the people who killed her husband, on whether she buried hundreds alive or sent flaming birds to set their cities on fire, or perhaps both.

"That's an impressive strategy if you want to be a mass murderer," said Humphries. "And that's Olga."

St. Olga, however, eventually embraced Christianity. She lived shortly after Sts. Cyril and Methodius, two missionary brothers who effectively invented the Slavonic language in order to translate the Bible.

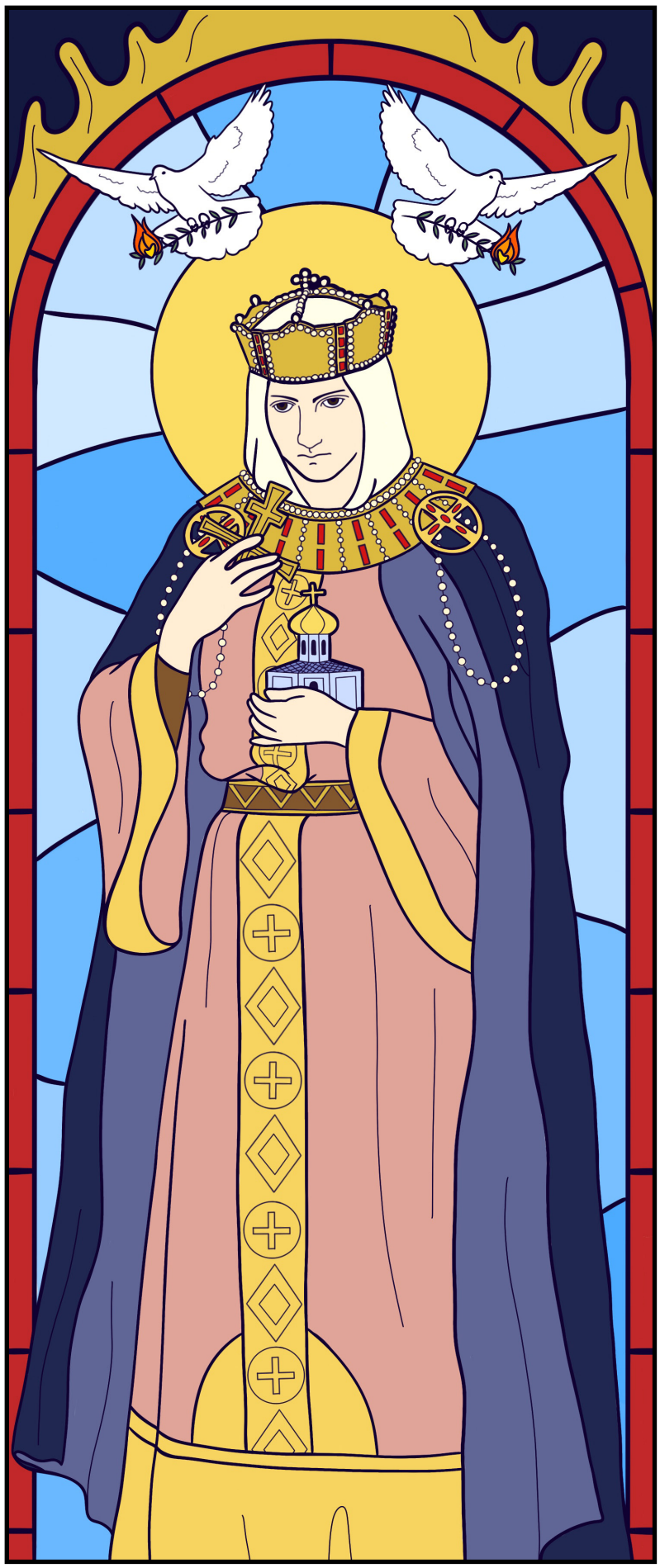
"In that missionary effort, Olga, towards the end of her life, recognizes that she needs to create a receptive land towards Christianity," said Humphries. "She invites the Bishop of Constantinople as well as the Pope … to send more missionaries to her land, and she builds churches."

St. Olga hoped to establish a bishop in Kyiv that the Church would recognize as sufficiently independent to allow the him to have the authority to ordain new bishops and create dioceses. This would have effectively given Kyiv a higher ecclesial status.

"It is not accomplished in her lifetime. She fails at it," said Humphries. "Her own son vehemently goes back to pagan ways."

On her deathbed, St. Olga lamented that she had built churches which remained empty. But her grandson, Volodymyr (Ukrainian) or Vladimir (Russian), the Great, leads the effort that causes Christianity to succeed in the region.

St. Olga's story is not one of failure but one of hope.



"Is she your patron and your icon because she's some kind of fierce woman warrior? Maybe so. Is she your icon because despite being a mass murderer, she converts to Christ?" Humphries reflected, "Honestly, none of us are going to be as devious and powerful as Olga… [but] even she can convert."

While St. Olga's patronage is of widows and converts, she represents so much to so many people of both Ukraine and Russia.

"There is a story of hope there," Humphries concluded. "'I've not been as bad as she is—maybe I, too, can convert?'"

Illustration by Reese Bradley

What makes a woman a woman?

Mariana Navarrete
Arts & Culture Editor

What it means to be a woman is very subjective, but in part, it is a whole spectrum of gender roles based on generation, culture, class, and privilege. Women experience womanhood, or their identity, in personal, different ways besides gender roles, too.

Being a woman is not tied to biology the way that we might have been taught as little kids years ago. We are always thinking about it in different ways. It is something that is not a stable identity, it is something fluid that shifts and is personal. There is more than one expression of what it means to be a woman.

Dr. Allyson Marino, an associate professor of English, shared that being a woman means having a choice.

"Growing up it was all very binary, there are girls and there are boys," Marino said. "As you became older and you become more educated and aware of the world, you realize there are spectrums of what it means to be male or female and it changes and it's expressed differently."

Gender roles are tied to culture and historical era, and are made even more subjective within a particular culture and time period.

Everyone who identifies as a woman in this place and this time, has experienced different gender roles of being a woman. Economic background and racial identity define gender roles in the course of each human's existence.

"If you look at medieval Europe you might have had a set of gender roles for upper class women: very rigid and hierarchical. But if you were a peasant, your life was tied to the land and the seasons and agriculture. There was not that much of a separation of: women do this and women do that," Marino explained.

Being a woman could be interpreted as being a character, a performance you have to wake up every morning to act on, like Judith Butler would write.

"So, when you start thinking about gender as performance, it makes it more pulled it apart from biological determination and gives us more possibility; it gives us more sense of choice," Marino said.

Gender is a social construct, but there are more implications to label gender performance as the basis of womanhood. At the end of the day, that actor cannot take all the costume off and get rid of the fact there are not consequences that follow through their lives.
Marino added, "it's much harder to walk away from of how we are disciplined and perceived in our surroundings into being a woman."

In the 1960s, the Civil Rights and Women's Rights movement were parallelly happening in the United States. Mainstream, mostly white upper-middle-class college-educated, became the catch-up feminism that yearned to stop being housewives, together with the right to vote. They wanted to change the definition of women beyond the domestic work, and to have power in the workplace and the political sphere.

Barbara Christianson in her book, "White Women, Listen!," explains that for many black women of the time, the domestic sphere was not a sign of oppression, it was a place of freedom, a place of safety and identity; the place of oppression was the workplace.

"Many of these black women were working in the houses for white women and it let white women to be empowered. White feminism grew on the backs of black women." Marino said.

In the spectrum of culture, class, and privilege, being a woman is personal, and the definition of being a woman varies, however there are some common denominators that intersect.

Pamela DeCius, the associate chair of language studies and the arts, explains that for her, being a woman means power.

"I think water and purple are two things I attribute to me and my womanhood," DeCius said.

DeCius has always loved purple since she was a child, and genuinely believes there is something about purple, some magic, that transmits power and is the definition of women.

"P is the initial of purple like it is of 'power'," DeCius said.

DeCius emphasized how nomadic people knew women's power and their longstanding connectedness to nature, but that, in 2022, there are still some unwritten rules not broken yet which dismiss the power of women in the domestic, political, social, and economic spheres.

"Women are limitless, and we can do whatever we want. There is not one woman that I can think of that I think is weak; they all have their own strengths, it all comes with the innate need to nurture and to be, and produce and to do things," DeCius added.

Women find ways to be all the things and inhabit many spheres in our lives trying to nurture everybody, without even having a child. A somehow common nurturing feeling could be something that makes us a woman, not because we want to give birth and have children, but how we nurture the communities that surround us.

"Sometimes, I wonder if that is a lot, to try to be all the things, and not get sufficient credit for it," DeCius said. "We need to be seen, we need to be heard, we need to be valued, for the queens that we are for whatever sphere that we decide to inhabit or the many spheres we want to inhabit."

Any individual who identifies as a female– and anyone in general– is a human being and needs to be valued.

DeCius highlighted, "Being a woman is a spectrum and wherever you land on that and whoever you want to be in that spectrum, you need to be empowered to do that."
Dr. Janice Price, associate professor of sociology and chair of the department of social sciences believes that being a woman means strength, similar to DeCius.

"For me personally, being a woman means that I am strong and weak, career and family-oriented," Prince said. "My gender does not define me. However, I recognize that being a woman in this place, at this time 'allows' me to embrace my humanity and ability to empathize."

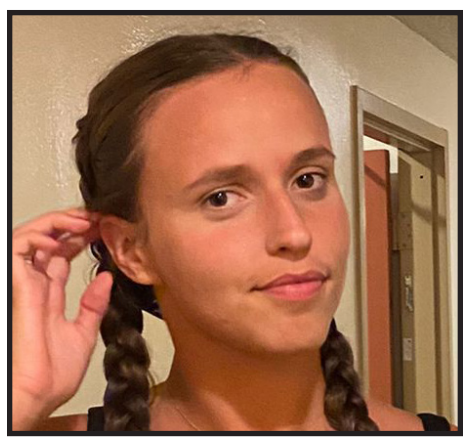
Prince stated that class and privilege dovetail in important ways for men and women. To consider being a woman without any attention to either of those is to ignore important aspects of our social context that shape the expressions of "womaness."

"A woman of the highest social class, with the most privileges, has the most options open," Prince explained. "Options that would allow that kind of woman very different opportunities that differ from those of a woman from a different background.

Overall, in very subjective terms, choice, power, nurture, and strength are common denominators of what makes a woman, a woman. Let's not forget it is a personal meaning, and it can always vary, since the womanhood spectrum in 2022 is very much stretched out compared to decades ago, which allows identified females to be valued as the women they want to be.

Angelica Molina, a junior majoring in global studies, said, "For me, being a woman is my biggest virtue."

Domenica Fierro, a sophomore majoring in biomedical sciences, said that being a woman is, "to be powerful, and be able to do whatever I want."



Romane Cayla, a freshman majoring in business, said that being a woman means to "be outspoken and express our opinions."

How should the USA's education system deal with censorship?

Lester Williams JR
Staff Writer

With society's perspectives changing all the time, it's unavoidable that old and new information in places like the education system are constantly endangered of being censored by the leaders of an institution and/or the government.

Censorship, according to www.aclu.org, is when images and words are concealed as a result of them being labeled as inappropriate.

Dr. Fern Aefsky, the director of graduate studies in education at Saint Leo University, has had experience as a principal, teacher, and district administrator and working in three states over three decades.

"It saddens me that politicians are not thinking about how educational systems are the right place for children and adults to learn from and about each other. Differences are to be celebrated, not censored." Aefsky said.

She mentions that politicians need to focus less on teachers and give more attention to safety concerns because, in the years before COVID-19,there were more than 9 shootings at schools.

The First Amendment of the United States is used to limit censorship in the educational system, as it ensures individuals' freedom of speech.

When dealing with censorship in the education system, teachers should take the First Amendment into consideration because censorship requires teachers to consider the rules within the First Amendment as well as the issues from the people, groups, and companies when dealing with changes caused by factors like religion and science.

By remembering the First Amendment's principles, teachers can help strengthen their argument when fighting against censorship by the administration. Yet, the U.S. still struggles with censorship issues leaving multiple Saint Leo University faculty members concerned.

"My educational philosophy differs greatly from what is portrayed in the media," said Dr. Alicia Corts, an assistant professor of theatre. "My job isn't to indoctrinate students in any ideology but to instead guide them toward critical thinking skills that allow them to see information, assess its value, and make informed decisions for themselves."

For Yvenie Desrosiers, a sophomore studying social work, "To take away critical race theory from the school system is like whipping away part of African American History."

Sophomore Emma Collins, a liberal arts major, supports the teaching of Critical Race Theory because, "Representation is important for everyone–how can we teach tolerance and acceptance if we don't understand our own history?"

Corts doesn't believe students are that malleable.

"By restricting topics that students can access, politicians are suggesting that the mere introduction of information is enough to somehow damage a student," Corts added.

In the case of the U.S. education system, International Bureau of Education (IBE) claims that the system's main goal is to ensure children will be able individually obtain their highest potential to be successful and effective members of society. The IBE is a part of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, who aim to provide excellence in comparative education.

Despite its good intention, the U.S. education system faces pressure from censoring things like reading material by multiple different factors such as administrators, parents, and school board members, who are against students reading specific information. One example of information that has recently been challenged is the Critical Race Theory.

Critical Race Theory is characterized as a technique for individuals to comprehend how the United States' experience with racism has changed the relationship between white people and people of color, according to an article published by Education Week.

In the spring of 2021, the theory became a prominent topic of concern, particularly iregarding primary and secondary education. Many conservatives, like Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, who opposes the idea being taught in schools, have taken notice of it.

"It violates Florida standards to scapegoat someone based on their race, to say that they're inherently racist, to say that they're an oppressor or oppressed or any of that," claimed Governor DeSantis in an interview from news.wfsu.org.

The actions of politicians like DeSantis have caused many people involved in the education system to question what the limits of censorship in the system.

"As an educator, I take seriously my responsibility to discuss meaningful and potentially sensitive topics in the classroom in ways that benefit students," said Dr. Elisabeth Aiken, an associate professor of English.

The Florida legislation prohibiting Critical Race theory discourse are a legal framework, not an academic one, according to Aiken, and they currently only apply to K-12 institutions.

"While CRT is a legal framework, not literary criticism, I do contextualize texts in my classes, aiming for an interdisciplinary approach that may include discussions of interpersonal or systemic racism in an effort to better understand the moment in which texts were created and our response to them," said Aiken.

Regardless of what side one is on when it comes to censorship in the education system there is value in hearing both sides of the argument and making an agreement of how certain information should be taught to students.

The Saint Leo Women's Golf Team fought like lionesses in St. Augustine, FL

Pia Perthen
Contributing Writer

A unique golf spirit surrounded the World Golf Hall of Fame in St. Augustine on Feb. 7 and 8. The Saint Leo Women's golf team got a taste of its breath-taking atmosphere and came proudly back to campus with hardware.

The Lions have competed in their first spring season tournament called Flagler College World Golf Invitational at the legendary Slammer & Squire golf course in St. Augustine, FL. The team got second out of 21 strong teams, and Francesca Santoni, a talented senior, secured the individual win.

Architect Bobby Weed designed the golf course with World Golf Hall of Fame members the "Slammer" - Sam Snead and the "Squire" - Gene Sarazen. Both were golf legends in American golf history in the last century.

The Women's golf team has proven their mental toughness in the windy and rainy weather, unusual for the Sunshine State. On the morning of the second day of the tournament, officials announced a start delay of one hour because the golf course was unplayable due to too much water on the fairways and greens!

Coach Lyndsey Bevill, head coach of the Saint Leo Women's golf team, said: "For every tournament, we prepare with the same mindset of getting one percent better every time on the golf course. One of my favorite phrases is that it is a marathon and not a sprint."

"The weather did not make it easier for us to play, but fortunately, Coach had us playing qualifiers in the cold days of January as well, so we were already used to it. I told myself that everyone has to play in the same condition and tried to stay focused and kept a good mindset throughout the tournament," Santoni said.

Santoni has successfully shown that she does two very solid golf rounds. She has especially impressed with her second round of golf, a score of 69 shots (-3), and therefore, she won the Individual Medal. She kept her nerves in tough conditions and was honored with SSC Women's Golfer of the Week for her outstanding performance.

"I am honored to say that this is my second award for this category, and it is always nice to get recognition. I am proud of this accomplishment," Santoni said.

Despite these adverse conditions, the women's golf team achieved a round score of -2 on the second day, which any other 20 college teams could not underplay. The 286 golf strokes shone brightly in the second round from the leader board and secured the runner-up for the Lions behind the winner Nova Southeastern.

"Great start to the spring season. Santoni led the way with her second individual win, and all of the girls played solid. I am always proud of my team, and everyone is giving their best effort," Bevill said.

Synne Lauritzen, senior and Laurence Lamer, freshman, fought like lions and both mastered to play even 72 (E) despite the bad weather on the second day.

Rose Morisette, a senior, also gave her best on the golf course and for the golf team alongside individual senior player, Louise Henningson.

Therefore, it is no surprise that Bevill was pleased with her team and treated them to an excellent burger dinner on the way home from the tournament.

A highlight, apart from golf, was the dinner invitation from Traci and Bob Bannon (both graduated from Saint Leo), who provided the women's golf team with laughter and impressed them with their cooking skills. Their impressive home was situated close to the venue in St. Augustine.

The Saint Leo Lions return to the competition on Monday, Feb 21. The Lions prepare to enter the Lady Moc Classic hosted at the Grassland Country Club in Lakeland, FL.

"The expectation is to compete and be in the final group in the last round. As much as it is expectation, the girl's expectations are higher," said Bevill.

Individual Scores from Flagler College World Golf Invitational

1 | Francesca Santoni (72-69-141): -3	T10 | Synne Lauritzen (76-72-148): +4
7 | Pia Perthen (72-73-145): +1	T48 | Rose Morissette (79-78-157): +13
T10 | Laurence Lamer (76-72-148): +4	T70 | Louise Henningsson* (80-83-163): +19

** Individual*

Road to victory: Saint Leo Swim Team heads to Nationals

Satyne Doner
Contributing Writer

Mar. 9, 2022, marked the beginning of the NCAA Division II Championships for Saint Leo University's swim team. This 4-day event took place in Greensboro, North Carolina, and eight swimmers from Saint Leo had a chance of earning a medal.

The road to nationals is with individual victories. Saint Leo's most recent swim tournament was the 2022 Sunshine State Conference Championships, which concluded on Feb. 20 in Clearwater. As a team, Saint Leo ranked 7th in the combined men's and women's divisions, winning four bronze medals with a final score of 493. This competition earned the team 611.4 points.

However, one student stood out during this meet: Jakub Kwasny placed 1st in the men's 200 Fly event with a fantastic time of 1:47:21. He also placed 3rd in the men's 100 Fly, with a time of 47.87. He received 771 points and 715 points for each event, respectively. The sophomore from Chorzów, Poland, is ranked 31st according to the Sunshine State Conference and 2nd on Saint Leo's roster with a total of 725.90 points for the 2021-22 season.

In the Spartan Invitational, held on Dec. 17, 2021, Kwasny had not just one but four personal bests, winning first place in the men's 100 and 200 Fly. On Jan. 28, 2022, Kwasny placed 1st in Saint Leo vs. Rollins's meet. His winning time was 1:56:76 in the men's 200 Fly. In the NCAA Division II Championship, Jakub Kwasny has a strong chance of securing a medal for Saint Leo University in the 200 Fly.

Similarly, Saint Leo sophomore Isabelle Sering shows potential in placing during nationals. She is currently ranked 12th in the Division II women's 100 Fly. Her performance during the Spartan Invitational earned her this ranking. She completed the women's 100 Fly in 54.50 seconds, scoring 746 points and tying for 2nd place. Originally from Trelleborg, Sweden, Sering has 732.90 points for the 2021-22 season. According to the Sunshine State Conference, she is ranked 29th in Sweden, 41st in NCAA Division II, 11th according to the Sunshine State Conference, and 1st on Saint Leo's women's swimming team.

Additionally, Sering delivered a stellar performance in Saint Leo vs. Rollins meet. Sering won a gold medal in the women's 50 Free with a time of 24.29 seconds. Combined with the Spartan Invitational, this achievement makes Isabelle Sering a top contender for a medal during nationals.

Undoubtedly, Jacob Kwasny and Isabelle Sering have great chances to earn a medal during the ongoing national championships.

However, there are six other Saint Leo University swim team members in attendance: Vittoria Bonsanti, Emma Bjornholdt, Elze Bielskute, Carlos Nava, Devin Green, and Szycymon Leszega. Together, these eight athletes genuinely embody the university's core values; they strive for both excellence and personal development, which in turn strengthens the community in which they belong.

The road to the NCAA Division II Championships is long, peppered with both victories and losses, but Saint Leo University's swim team has proven time and time again that they stand resilient and ambitious. They have weathered 5 AM training sessions and traveled long hours to competitions, all while maintaining their commitment to excellence inside and outside of the classroom.

With Jakub Kwasny's 1st place finish in the Sunshine State Conference Championships and Isabelle Sering's searing hot streak in both the Spartan Invitational and Saint Leo vs. Rollins meet, they both have a chance at earning a medal during nationals. Saint Leo University is undoubtedly proud of all eight students representing their college during the NCAA Division II Championships.

Saint Leo Spring Sports Preview

Anthony Martinez
Sports Editor

Winter sports have either ended or are wrapping up. With both the men's and women's basketball seasons coming to an end and the swimmers heading to nationals, it's time to turn the focus onto spring sports, which for many are already underway.

Starting with tennis, both the men's and women's teams are starting out looking very strong early in the season.

The women's team is currently undefeated at 5-0 and is nationally ranked at #8 in the nation. Looking back at last season, where the team had to deal with postpones and uncertainty due to COVID-19, they still performed great, going 7-1 in the regular season.

They played in the Sunshine State Conference Tournament against Nova Southeastern, who was #3 in the country, who they fell short too. Then in the NCAA Regionals, they got revenge and defeated them before losing to Barry in the next round.

They look to build on that great year last year with an even better one, and currently, as an undefeated team, they'll look to do just that. A key matchup will be against Nova Southeastern on Mar. 19, as that will tell a lot of their progress.

The men's team last year had similar success in many ways, who ended the season at a very impressive 9-3. They played in the Sunshine State Conference Tournament, where they defeated Lynn before losing to #2 Barry in the finals. The regionals were a similar fate as they defeated Delta-State in the first round. Before again losing to Barry in the second round.

They were as high at #4 in the nation last season; currently, they sit as #9 in the nation, with a 6-2 record. The team just managed a massive win over the #2 team in the country, Valdosta State. They'll eventually get that rematch with Barry on Mar. 20 – a very anticipated rematch.

Moving to baseball, the men are already fifteen games into the season, and currently, they sit at a record of 8-7. It is a solid record for sure, but what is even more impressive than their record is their improvement.

In 2020, when COVID-19 ended the season, the team finished 7-15, eight games under .500. Move to the confusing last season, they finished that year at 9-17, again finishing eight games under .500.

With that, they're currently a game over .500, which is a significant difference and getting some very good play out of some athletes. One standout is redshirt senior Adrien Roa, who is hitting an incredible .455 this year. Consistency at the plate has been his game this season, and Saint Leo is happy for it.

Next, the softball team has been as good as any team in the entire nation. While that might seem like a bold statement, the team has been dominant. At this point in the season, the team has a record of 14-2. Even crazier than the record is the team's win streak, a twelve-game win streak.

They have not lost in nearly a month; while a lot of that can be attributed to the offense, one could argue that the defense is leading them in their win streak. They already have five shutout wins, and along with that, there are several games where the opponent only scored one run.

A big part of that defense starts with pitching, and pitcher sophomore Kayla Betts has played tremendously: 5-2 as a starter, a 1.94 ERA. In the last twelve innings for Betts, she has not allowed a single hit, an incredible feat, a source of pride.

Moving on to lacrosse, the women team's start to the season has not been idealistic. In Spring 2020, the team went 4-3 before the rest of the season got canceled, and the team looked like it had a lot of upsides. In 2021, in just a 10-game season, they went 5-5.

#44 Junior outfielder Bobby Sparling hit a home-run against Kentucky Wesleyan to help extend the Lions winning streak.

So far, this season is four games in and currently have a 1-3 record on the year. Their win comes against Alabama-Huntsville on Feb. 11. Now, it's nothing to be discouraged over, it is a very long season and many more games to go, and they have the talent to go on a great run.

The men are only three games into the season, but it's been a positive start. 2-1 is certainly a nice way to start the year, especially when considering last season, they only went 3-7 over the year, finishing the year on a four-game losing streak as a result. So within three games, Saint Leo is already one win away from matching last season's total. The goals are a lot more than that, but it's not a bad way to kick it out.

Both the men's and women's golf teams resumed action in February, playing in three invitational/classics. They have been consistently strong since returning to action, with one of the six placements for them not being in the top half.

Spring is off to a fast and, overall, very successful start. We'll have to see if our Saint Leo Lions can continue reaching their goals and playing at a high level in all their sports.

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